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DE RUEHKA #1389 2390933
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FM AMEMBASSY DHAKA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4898
INFO RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 8071
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 1805
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 9257
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 0124
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA 0897
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 0546
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

UNCLAS DHAKA 001389

SIPDIS

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DRL FOR: SGHORI, G/TIP FOR: SNEUMANN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PHUM PGOV KGOV KDEM BG

SUBJECT: SIGMA HUDA CONVICTED OF EXTORTION

REF: A. DHAKA 1155

1B. DHAKA 1295

1C. DHAKA 1379

11. (SBU) SUMMARY. Nazmul and Sigma Huda were found guilty of extortion by a special anti-corruption court on August 27. Both received prison sentences, though the family will appeal. Sigma's health has improved recently. According to her sister, she is now able to get most of the health tests she requires. END SUMMARY.

SIGMA SENTENCED TO THREE YEARS IN PRISON

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12. (SBU) Former BNP Communications Minister Nazmul Huda and his wife, United Nations Anti-Trafficking Special Rapporteur Sigma Huda, have been convicted of extortion by a special anti-corruption court. Nazmul Huda, was sentenced to seven years in prison and fined 25 million taka (approximately \$362,000) for extortion, and Sigma was sentenced to three years for abetting extortion. According to Sigma's sister, Khushi Kabir, they are planning to appeal the verdict immediately in the High Court.

SIGMA'S HEALTH "BETTER"

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13. (SBU) Kabir told POLOFF Sigma's health has "improved" now, a result of her transfer from the Dhaka Central Jail to the prison facilities at Bangabondhu Sheikh Mujib Medical Center in early August. Although the authorities are still "dragging their feet" authorizing certain tests, Sigma is receiving most of the important tests, including a blood sugar analysis, regularly. In addition, Kabir said the water in her sister's lungs has been reduced and "maybe her heart is okay now," although Sigma still requires periodic heart check-ups given her history of cardiac problems.

CONDITIONS IN HOSPITAL PRISON

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14. (SBU) Sigma's family has also been allowed to make certain improvements to Sigma's hospital room, including installing a light switch, fixing the toilet, and changing out the shower spigot. Kabir said it still takes a week or more to get administrative approvals, and the family has to pay for any improvements out of their own pocket.

15. (SBU) Post continues to monitor this and other on-going corruption cases.

